

ARIYAMAGGA BHAVANA

(The Sublime Eightfold Way)

Level II-*Tranquility of Mind*



Awakening from the
dream of existence
(*satta bojjhanga*)

Cultivation of
Tranquility
(*sammappadhana*)

Selective Thinking
(*anussati*)

by Ven. Dr. Madawela Punnaji Maha Thera

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ARIYAMAGGA BHAVANA

THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY

INTERMEDIATE RETREAT

TRANQUILITY OF MIND

Instructor

Ven. Dr. Madawela Punnañi Maha Thera

This form of meditation is based on the original teachings of the Buddha as it is found in the Pali Sutta Pitaka. It is conducted at three retreat levels:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| (1) Beginner | – | Selective Thinking
(<i>anussati</i>) |
| (2) Intermediate | – | Cultivation of Tranquility
(<i>sammappadhāna</i>) |
| (3) Advanced | – | Awakening from the
dream of existence
(<i>satta bojjhanga</i>) |

THE INTRODUCTION

Buddhist meditation, as taught by us in this retreat, is not a mystical practice. This technique of meditation is for people who are living a secular life as householders, who go to work, have responsibilities, and who are involved in various social relationships. What such people need is freedom from stress, and freedom from worries and anxieties of life. They need peace of mind, healthy relationships, self-confidence, success in life, and efficiency at work. This means learning to gain control over the emotional disturbances that prevent them from thinking clearly or acting rationally. These problematic emotional disturbances come in the form of anger, lust, worries, fears, and anxieties. The form of Buddhist meditation we teach helps one free the mind of emotional disturbances and to think clearly and act rationally.

It involves a systematic technique of consciously purifying the mind. All impurities arise from self-centered emotional states. The pure mind is the tranquil mind. When the mind is purified, one experiences an inner happiness, a physical comfort, and a kindness and compassion that one has never experienced before. The happiness that we refer to is not a state of emotional excitement, but a tranquil state of the mind. The kindness and compassion we teach is not based on attachment, it is a state of unselfishness. As we understand it, emotional excitement is not true happiness, and attachment is not true love. Happiness and kindness are attributes of the pure and tranquil mind.

Therefore the aim of this method of meditation is to cultivate a relaxed body, and a calm mind, resulting in the experience of happiness and a kindness of heart.

THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY

This practice of meditation is based on the teaching of the Buddha called the “Sublime-Eight-fold Way” (*ariya atthangika magga*), which is the way to the cessation of all suffering. The term “ariya,” which is commonly translated as “noble,” we have translated as “Sublime,” because it is a supernormal state. This is because the Buddha used the term “ariya” to refer to a higher level of consciousness beyond the normal. The aim of Buddhist meditation is to raise the human consciousness to a higher level, which is beyond the normal. It is more meaningful to translate it as “super-normal,” rather than “noble.” Just as the aim of modern psychotherapy is to raise an abnormal person to a normal level of living, the aim of the Buddha was to bring the normal person to a super-normal level.

We call this supernormal level “Sublime.” It is very important therefore to understand this distinction between “noble” and “Sublime.” This is why we call Buddhist meditation a growth technique, rather than the practice of rules or the rituals in obedience to a lord, out of fear or favour. Therefore, the purpose of the practice of Buddhist meditation is to grow to a higher level of emotional maturity, beyond the normal, and to experience a degree of happiness and kindness beyond the normal. Buddhist meditation is a method of gaining emotional maturity through purification of the mind.

This process of growth of the mind takes place as a psychological evolutionary process. Although biological evolution went on unconsciously based on the natural law of “determinism,” this psychological evolutionary process is consciously executed following a systematic technique, because it is the evolution of consciousness itself. It does not work unconsciously or automatically, or even through a supernatural

power. It too is based on the natural law of determinism, though consciously achieved.

This practice is based on one's own human power. We are not depending on any external power, not even that of a teacher or *guru*. We have to do it self-reliantly by ourselves. This is a "do-it-yourself" technique. We do not believe that a person is born with a free will, but will-power has to be developed, based on the principle of determinism. In a sense, this method of meditation can be called the development of will power, to control one's irrational emotions. In other words, we are using our conscious mental power to control the unconscious mental process that is going on deterministically.

This is what one learns from our lessons at the center and during our retreats. It is learning how to act rationally instead of emotionally. One will be shown the tools within one, to work on oneself. Working on oneself is one's own job, not the teacher's. The teacher's job is only to show the tools that one already possesses, and to give the instructions on how to use them. Our hope is that you will be able to work on yourself and grow, evolve, and transform. The degree of transformation, and quality of life experienced is the measure of progress. What we look for is growth and transformation, not mere insight. This is why we do not call this method of meditation, "insight meditation." We also do not expect visions or hallucinations of any kind. If what you gain from a retreat is only more will-power, and peace of mind, then you have gained a degree of success.

The first thing one must do is to acquire the right understanding that comes in the form of the harmonious perspective. One must understand that all unhappiness that we experience in life is not due to our unfavorable circumstances,

but due to the way we react to our circumstances or our attitude to circumstances. This means that our unhappiness, its cause, and its cure and the way to its cure are within us. In other words, we must stop worrying about our circumstances, and start questioning our attitude to our circumstances, in order to correct it.

STOP REACTING AND START RESPONDING

To put it in another way, we must stop reacting to circumstances and start responding to them. A reaction is emotional and unconscious, while a response is rational and conscious. As mentioned earlier, the difference between an animal and a human being is that animals are passively reacting emotionally to circumstances, while human beings have the capacity to respond rationally to circumstances, by consciously delaying the reaction to get sufficient time to decide, the appropriate response to make in a given situation. Yet the normal human being does not always choose to respond rationally, they often react emotionally like animals. This means that the normal human being is a kind of animal, carrying the animal nature; until, of course, one has fully evolved to the fully human level, where one does not react emotionally to circumstances any more but instead responds rationally to them.

All this explanation means, the normal human being is not yet fully evolved. This is why we have to go through this process of psychological evolution and learn through meditation to evolve, and grow up. This growth is a conscious psychological process rather than an unconscious biological one. The normal human being, when fully evolved, becomes a supernormal human being, who is free from selfish emotional

behaviour. He is no more an “ego” or “self,” but a “Sublime” individual who is perfectly “selfless.”

This means, all emotions are self-centered. True selflessness is not an emotion. True love is selfless. It is called *metta* the universal benevolence, which is the absence of lust, hate, and the delusion of self. When *metta* is fully developed it results in *karuna*, which is universal compassion, where there is no distinction between oneself and others. Others become as important as one-self, to the person with *karuna*, just as a mother thinks of her only child. Here one loses oneself in the interest in all beings. Therefore proper development of compassion results in the freedom from unhappiness called *mudita*, which is the happiness of selflessness. This happiness is not an emotional excitement. It is a state of tranquility of mind, of peaceful happiness, which is introverted rather than extroverted. This means this happiness is not dependent on external circumstances. This introverted state of mind also facilitates introspection *upekkha*. Introspection facilitates apperception (*abhinna*), which is the awareness of “experience” (meaning: how we perceive) instead of “existence” (meaning: what we perceive). By “experience” we mean the process by which we become aware of what we perceive. This helps one awaken from the dream of existence, through a paradigm shift from “existence” to “experience.”

SENSE OF VALUES

All human beings have a sense of values. They have different ideas of what is good or great or superior. And according to each person’s sense of values, each person will feel inferior, superior or equal. If a person thinks that wealth is superior, then the moment this person meets a wealthier person,

he/she begins to feel inferior. If a person thinks that high social position is superior, he/she will feel inferior in the presence of any person who is greater in social position. Likewise, if a person thinks that popularity is the greatest thing; that person begins to feel inferior upon meeting a person who is more popular than himself or herself. If a person thinks that enjoying sensual pleasure is the greatest thing, then that person will feel inferior in the presence of some one who is enjoying more sensual pleasures. This is how people feel inferior or superior. This worldly sense of values was shown by the Buddha to be not only unhealthy but it also brings unhappiness, disappointment, frustration, sorrow, pain, anxieties, and worry.

The Buddha pointed out that happiness is to be sought not outside in wealth, status, popularity or sensual pleasures; but rather, inside in peace of mind. This happiness within is inner peace, calm or tranquility of mind. If one can understand that inner peace is the greatest thing in the world, then one will automatically begin to seek inner peace. When one meets a calm person, one does not feel inferior any more, but one begins to appreciate the person and one is inspired. When we are really convinced that calmness is the greatest thing, we do not need tranquilizers. Tranquilizers are needed only when we are not convinced that calmness is the greatest thing, because then our goal is not calmness. It is the goal, based on our sense of values that determines our calmness.

It is our sense of values therefore that makes us calm or not calm. You have heard the word “*Nirvāna*” or “*Nibbāna*” which is regarded as the ultimate goal of the Buddhist. Some think that Nirvāna is some kind of Heaven but that is not what Nirvāna is. **Nirvāna** simply means the **Imperturbable Serenity of mind**. (*nir* is the negative prefix like the English

“non,” and *vana* means shaking). “Nirvāna” is the tranquility of mind that is not shaken by anything, even in the face of death. It is a tranquility of mind that can never be disturbed. This is why it is called the **imperturbable serenity of mind**.

We become what we value or worship. When we understand and appreciate the value of Nirvana, it becomes our goal in life. This results in a reorientation of our life to reach this goal. Then, we do not need any special effort to attain Nirvana. Our life is automatically reorganized to reach that goal. This reorganization of life is called entering the stream (*sotāpanna*). Even if we cannot reach the end in this present life, we will reach it within seven lives.

THE PATH OF STREAM ENTRY

The sequence of events that leads to stream entry is called **“The Path of Stream Entry”** (*sotāpatti āṅga*):

- i. Association with those who value Tranquility of mind as the highest good (*sappurisa sevana*).
- ii. Hearing about the value of Tranquility (*saddhamma savana*).
- iii. Deterministic thinking about the conditions necessary for the gaining of Tranquility (*yoniso manasikāra*).
- iv. Reorganization of life to reach the goal of Tranquility (*dhammānudhamma patipatti*).

When our perspective on life changes, our sense of values change. When our sense of values changes our goal in life changes. When our goal in life is fully established, our life reorganizes to reach this goal. Then our thoughts, speech, and

actions change to fall in line with our goal. Then we don't have to push ourselves to meditate. Meditation will automatically take place because meditation is the means to the goal we are trying to reach. Our life will automatically move towards the goal we have chosen. We do not have to make any special effort, or make any resolution to meditate. We do not need any will-power to meditate. We do not have to force ourselves to meditate. We do not need to say, "*I don't have any time*", or "*I have to make time*". We will automatically have time to meditate, because that is what we want to do.

If we really want to do something, we will always have the time. It is only when we are not really interested in doing something that we do not have time for it. This means, when we have the right understanding, or harmonious perspective, we will begin to meditate automatically. Then meditation is not something we do. It becomes our way of life.

Meditation is the way of life that leads to calmness of the mind and relaxation of the body. Calmness of mind makes one happy and relaxation of body makes one comfortable. Both calmness and happiness make one kind and compassionate.

Therefore to become a Buddhist is to acquire the harmonious perspective and the right sense of values, with the belief that every human being can transcend all human weaknesses and reach the highest perfection as the Buddha did, if he/she only tried. Suffering, its cause, its end, and the way to its end, is not outside us but within us. **It is right within you and me.**

Therefore evolve, and be transformed. You too can reach **The Imperturbable Serenity of Mind**

Good luck. Enjoy. Be happy.

PRACTICE OF THE LEVEL II RETREAT

Only Three steps in the practice

- 1) Withdrawal of attention from perceptual images
- 2) Withdrawal of attention from memory images
- 3) Focusing attention on the body
 - a) Relaxing the body
 - b) Calming the breathing
 - c) Attainment of stillness of mind – Ecstasy (Jhana)

In the Beginner's Retreat, Level-I, we focused on the Harmonious Perspective and the Harmonious Orientation, which results in Harmonious Speech, Action and Lifestyle. At this Intermediate Retreat, Level-II, we focus on the next step in the Sublime Eightfold Way, which is the **Harmonious Exercise**, which leads to the Harmonious Mental Equilibrium. This mental equilibrium achieved at this retreat, however, is temporary, because it can be lost if the mind gets polluted again, due to negligence or a lack of maintenance.

The equilibrium will remain undisturbed only when *Nibbāna* is reached, through the practice of the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*). This practice will be done, however, only at the Level-III Retreat. When Nirvāna is attained, one gains the tranquillity that can never be disturbed. This is why Nirvana is called the **Imperturbable Serenity of Mind** (*akuppā-ceto-vimutti*). This is also called “Equilibrium without a break” (*samādhim-ānantarika-aññamāhu*).

At the beginner's retreat Level-I, meditation was seen as an effort to **purify the mind**, and we called our practice **Selective Thinking**. At this intermediate retreat, Level-II, meditation should be seen as an effort to **calm the mind**,

and we call our practice, Cultivating **Tranquility Of Mind**. The cultivation of tranquillity is properly achieved through the Harmonious Exercise. This practice achieves two things: mental calmness and physical relaxation.

The aim of this intermediate retreat therefore is to learn to purify and quieten the mind. To purifying the mind, is to quieten the mind. The pure and quiet mind is a happy mind that also brings happiness to others. The aim of this retreat is therefore to BE A HAPPY PERSON who also BRINGS HAPPINESS TO THE WORLD.

PRACTICE OF THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY

As already mentioned, this method of meditation is based on The Sublime Eightfold Way, as taught by the Buddha. (KS Vol. 5: 7-9)

It is very important to understand that this technique of meditation is a method of transforming oneself from a **self-centered** personality into a **selfless** one, by following the Supernormal Eight-fold Way. There are eight steps to be followed. They are as follows:

1. Harmonious Perspective (*sammā-ditthi*)
2. Harmonious Orientation (*sammā-sankappa*)
3. Harmonious Speech (*sammā-vācā*)
4. Harmonious Action (*sammā-kammanta*)
5. Harmonious Lifestyle (*sammā-ājīva*)
6. Harmonious Exercise (*sammā-vāyāma*)
7. Harmonious Attention (*sammā-sati*)
8. Harmonious Mental Equilibrium (*sammā-samādhi*)

The first step is to acquire the harmonious perspective. The harmonious perspective is the perspective that brings about harmony internally and externally. This is a perspective, not merely a right view or a right understanding. This is a different way of looking at life, yourself, the world, and your relationship to the world. It is seeing things in a different way that does not create conflict internally or externally.

Even Charles Darwin the originator of the modern theory of evolution saw **life** as a **struggle for existence**. It needed the evolution of a Buddha to realize that this struggle was only a **mistake**, for it was **an effort to be permanent in an**

impermanent world. This struggle, however, occurred quite unconsciously and deterministically. No one was responsible for it. Even after the evolution of the thinking human being, this futile effort is continued quite unconsciously through blind emotions. This struggle stands out in the human being as a conflict between blind emotions and the rational intelligence that is aware of reality. It needed the evolution of a Buddha, however, to see this mistake and realize that the cause of the problem was the blind emotions that clashed with the reality conceived by intelligence. This distressful conflict is what the Buddha called suffering (*dukkha*).

There are three kinds of conflict that emotions come up with:

1. With nature
2. With people
3. With reason

It was to resolve this conflict by eliminating the blind emotions that the Buddha found this Sublime Eightfold Way.

THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY IN DETAIL

The Harmonious Perspective (*sammā-ditthi*)

This perspective is to become aware of:

- i. **The insecurity of life** (*dukkha*)
- ii. The **cause** of this **insecurity** (*samudaya*)
- iii. The **end** of this **insecurity** (*nirodha*)
- iv. The **way to end** this **insecurity** (*magga*).

The insecurity of life was what Siddhatta Gotama, the Bodhisatta, realized more than twentyfive centuries ago, when he saw the old man, the sick man, and the dead corpse. In modern times, the Western philosophy called Existentialism has dramatically drawn attention to this problem. Yet no one so far has been able to solve this problem in the modern world. It was only the Buddha, 25 centuries ago in the East, who found the solution by awakening from the dream of existence. He found the way to immortality and revealed it to the world, but only those with ears to hear, and only those with a little dust in their eyes, could listen and be free from death. He set out to enlighten the world, beating the drum of immortality (*amata dundubin*), with the words:

“Open is the door to immortality

For those who have ears to hear
Listen to my sound and be free from death.”

The sound is still ringing –)))
Only those who pay attention will hear
Only those with little dust in their eyes will see

Of course some thinkers have found an escape from this stark reality of death in a fantastic dream world, called Heaven, where there is eternal life and eternal happiness after death, even though this fantasy is far beyond verifiable certainty, until death intervenes – to put the fact beyond any doubt.

The Buddha, on the other hand, sought a real solution to the real problem within reality itself, instead of escaping into a fantasy beyond certainty. He examined the existential problem of death here and now to find a solution here and now. His aim was to find the cause of the problem, and to solve the problem by eliminating the cause.

What he discovered was that the cause of the problem, and its solution, was to be found within us and not outside. The cause was our blind emotions that come in conflict with the reality perceived through our intellect. This conflict that caused much suffering could be resolved only by eliminating these blind emotions. Elimination of emotions could be achieved only by finding the conditions essential for the arousal of emotions.

He discovered that these emotions are aroused deterministically, and therefore it was only by eliminating one of the necessary conditions that the emotional arousal could be stopped. Such an elimination of emotions was a transcendence of normal human nature, and the realization of a Supernormal Consciousness. This realization also resulted in a **paradigm shift** from the notion of “**personal existence**” to the notion of “**impersonal experience**,” ending in **absolute selflessness**.

It is to achieve this **transcendence** that Buddhist meditation is practiced at Level III by the monastic followers. The lay Buddhist leading a secular life can also benefit from

this practice, however, because it helps one learn to gain control over the emotions that stand as an obstacle to peaceful living.

Those who understand that emotion is the culprit that stands responsible for the sufferings of life, begin to eliminate emotion at every nook and cranny. This is what begins the important reorientation of life.

Harmonious Orientation (*sammā-sankappa*)

This is the reorganization of one's life, by turning in a new direction, recognizing the value of calmness of mind. It is to turn towards calmness or freedom from emotional excitements, as the solution to the problem of life. This U-turn in life has to be taken by visualizing and appreciating the harmonious goal, which is calmness. This reorientation can occur only if one understands the danger, futility and mental confusion resulting from the pursuit of sensual pleasure, and the advantage of the pursuit of renunciation, relaxation, and tranquility of mind. In the present age, this can also be seen as the understanding of the meaning and value of stress management.

Relaxation and tranquility must be seen as the medial path between self-indulgence and self-denial. It is the way to true goodness, happiness, and wisdom. Commonly people see happiness as the gratification of emotional impulses. They see goodness as the denial of emotional impulses. Therefore being good is the opposite of being happy. This is why people prefer to be happy than to be good. They hate to be good. They even look down upon people who try to be good because they see them as cowards, who fear to gratify their emotions out of a feeling of guilt, or fear of punishment. People who often prefer to appear to be good are those who have been brought up under

strict discipline during childhood. Such people often become criminals when they grow up to show off their power.

People who turn to be bad to show off their power were shown by the Buddha that goodness is not denial of emotions and bad is not gratification of emotions. He pointed out that goodness is the way to happiness and badness is the way to unhappiness. He pointed out that gratification of emotions is not the way to happiness; nor is it the suppression of emotions or even repression. Happiness is the complete elimination of emotions. He pointed out that emotions can be eliminated and there is nothing wrong in doing so. It only makes one transcend the normal emotional level of being. It is rising up to a supernormal level, which is called the Sublime (*ariya*) level.

Self-indulgence (*kâma sukhallikânu yoga*) is being carried away by emotional impulses, and self-denial (*atta kilamatânu yoga*) is the attempt to conquer the flesh by flagellation and other methods of self-torture. Avoiding these two extremes the Buddha pointed out a medial way to deal with emotions. Instead of expressing emotions in action or even suppressing or repressing emotions, one can learn to relax the body and calm the mind.

What this means is, every emotional arousal creates muscular tension in the body. This tension makes the body uncomfortable. It is to get rid of this discomfort that the body releases tension in action, quite unconsciously, to obtain what is desired, or to get rid of what is hated, or to run away from what is feared, or even weep when nothing can be done. Every emotional action is an unconscious release of tension. If this is so, instead of unconsciously releasing tension in action, we can always learn to consciously relax the tension and be happy

all the time. Happiness therefore is none other than the relaxed state of the body and the tranquil state of the mind.

Emotion is a disturbance of the body caused by the pictures we hold in the mind. By learning to relax the body, and to hold calming images in the mind, it is possible to free the mind of emotional disturbances. This means visualizing calmness is the medial way between expression and suppression or repression of emotions to overcome emotions. To visualize calmness, is to make calmness the goal towards which we move.

It is also helpful to understand the distinction between pleasure and happiness. Pleasure is derived from the stimulation of the senses, where as happiness is the undisturbed tranquility of mind. It is only when one has understood that calmness is the only true value of life that the body and mind will become reorganized to reach this goal.

Pursuit of calmness is the medial path between the pursuit of pleasure and the pursuit of goodness. Being carried away by emotions is the pursuit of pleasure (*kâma sukhallikânu yoga*). Attempting to suppress the emotions is the pursuit of goodness (*atta kilamatânu yoga*). Learning to relax is the pursuit of calm or tranquility of mind (*adhi cittanu yoga*), or the pursuit of the Supernormal Mind – NIRVANA.

This means, when properly oriented, we begin to gain control over our emotions, instead of being carried away by them, and we begin to act rationally. In other words, we begin to stop reacting to situations in life, and start responding to them. A reaction is unconscious and emotional, while a response is conscious and rational. This means we think, feel, and act rationally instead of emotionally, which is to maintain a good

disposition that maintains happiness within oneself, as well as in others, wherever we go.

This is the perfect orientation, which is to be oriented towards the new and supreme goal of **imperturbable serenity of mind** (*akuppā-ceto-vimutti*), called Nirvāna. This healthy orientation results in the withdrawal from bad dispositions and the cultivation of good dispositions.

Bad Disposition	Good Disposition
1. Passionate	1. Dispassionate
2. Angry	2. Loving
3. Cruel	3. Kind

With this healthy orientation comes a complete reorganization of one's life, where one's speech, action, and lifestyle changes to calm and composed way of life that is pleasant to oneself as well as to all others that one encounters.

1) Harmonious Speech (*sammā-vācā*)

This is speech that does not create conflict between oneself and others, but instead creates happiness wherever one goes.

Bad Speech	Good Speech
1. Dishonesty in speech	1. Honesty in speech
2. Disloyalty in speech	2. Loyalty in speech
3. Discourteous speech	3. Courteous speech
4. Harmful, idle speech	3. Harmless, helpful speech

2) Harmonious Action (*sammā-kammanta*)

This is our behaviour that is always pleasant to ourselves as well as to others.

Bad Action	Good Action
1. Disrespect for living-beings	1. Respect for living-beings
2. Plundering others property	2. No plundering others property
3. Immoral sensual enjoyment	3. Moral sensual enjoyment

3) Harmonious Lifestyle (*sammā-ājīva*)

Here we are referring to our lifestyle, more than the jobs we do to earn a living, or our occupation. The harmonious life style is the unselfish, friendly, honest, compassionate, and tolerant way of living that is helpful but not harmful to anyone in the world. This is the automatic consequence of the harmonious disposition. It is possible to speak good words or do good actions occasionally but have a bad life style, where one gets angry and greedy often, and even being hated by others for one's behaviour. If one has a good life style one will always be good, honest and helpful, and will be loved by everyone.

When a person has successfully completed the practice up to this point, he has become a stream entrant (*sotā panna*). A stream entrant is one who has entered the stream. The stream is the Sublime Eightfold Way. This is the stream that ultimately falls into the ocean – Nirvana. To become a stream entrant one has to break three, out of the ten bonds that bind one to existence or being (*bhava*). These three bonds are:

- Personality perspective (*sakkaya ditthi*)
- Cognitive dissonance (*vicikicca*)
- Heteronomous morality (*silabbata paramasa*)

The personality perspective is broken when one has understood the **Fourfold Sublime Reality**, which is the understanding of the **insecurity of life**, its **cause**, its **end**, and the **way** to its end. When this has been understood in the proper way, the “notion of self” is intellectually discarded, because the Buddha pointed out that the insecurity, in short, consists of the five personalized gatherings (*panca-upâdânakkhanda*): images, feelings, sensations, constructions, and perceptions. The five gatherings are intellectually depersonalized at this point. Yet the emotional “sense of self” still remains. Though one understands that it is wrong, the “feeling of self” still remains.

The cognitive dissonance is due to the emotions and reason being at loggerheads: reasoning indicates that there is no “self,” but emotion feels the “self.” This dissonance is experienced even in the behaviour. One intellectually accepts the five precepts as good behaviour and even sets out to practice it, but when overcome by anger or lust one breaks the virtuosity.

Heteronomous morality is when one behaves morally only to please others or because others or the law wants one to be moral. Even morality based on obedience to God is not free from this allegation. The stream entrant is the only one who is free from this error because he has understood the need for morality, which is to establish peace and happiness within oneself as well in the world outside.

The practice up to this point is the work of the beginner’s retreat, Level I.

4) Harmonious Exercise (*sammā-vāyāma*)

It is here that the intermediate retreat begins. It is the systematic effort to purify the mind. When this exercise is successfully completed, the purified mind enters the first ecstasy (*jhana*), which is followed by the second, third, and fourth.

This exercise comprises four parts:

Prevention (*samvara*),

Elimination (*pahāna*),

Cultivation (*bhāvanā*), and

Maintenance (*anurakkhana*).

I) Prevention (*Samvara*)

The impurities enter the mind through the senses. They enter when we focus our attention on the sensory objects. To **prevent** this we withdraw our attention from sensory objects, which is to stop reflecting on the pleasantness or the unpleasantness of the object. This is called guarding the senses. Let us examine the words of the Buddha in translation, as it is found in the Sutta.

Herein, a meditator, seeing an image with the eye, is not preoccupied with what is seen or with what is associated with it, so that attraction, repulsion and evil, unprofitable states of mind may not flow into the mind, as it would if one dwelled with this eye-faculty uncontrolled, and did not apply oneself to such control, or set guard over the eye-faculty.

Hearing a sound with the ear, or smelling an odour with the nose, or tasting a savour with the tongue, or contacting tangibles with the body, or cognising mental states with the mind, one is not preoccupied with their general features, or by their associations so that attraction, repulsion and evil,

unprofitable states of mind may not flow upon one, as it would, if one dwelled with ones ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind uncontrolled and did not apply oneself to such control, or set guard over these faculties.

This, in fact, is a withdrawal of attention from what ever is perceived through the senses. It is closing our mind to external objects perceived. This way we are being free of disturbances within due to environmental influences. In other words, we are preventing the mind from being polluted by forces coming from outside. This way we also stop reacting to stimulation of the senses by the environment.

II) Elimination (*Pahāna*)

Elimination is the removal of bad thoughts that have already arisen in the mind. If after the practice of prevention as above, any emotional excitement remains in the mind, it is due to carrying a memory of something that happened in the past, which produces the emotional excitement. This is called carrying a “memory image.” The emotional excitement can be removed by **withdrawing** our attention away from this memory image.

In order to do so we may begin to focus our mind on a different image, which is the opposite of the present image. For example if the original image was the image of an enemy, we can focus our attention on the image of a friend. If that is difficult we can make a telephone call to that friend and speak to the friend. If a telephone is not available, we can write a letter to the friend, even if we may not mail it. If the friend is available close by, we can even visit the friend and speak to

the friend. This is the kind of help a counsellor can give to a disturbed client.

This is analogous to watching a television program and upon seeing unwholesome content appearing, one changes the television channel to another channel with more wholesome content.



The *Vitakka-santhana Sutta* of the *Majjimanikaya*, which was given in translation in the book on Level I meditation shows five methods of dealing with this problem. Reference to this passage may be helpful at this stage. Let us now refer to the instructions given by the Buddha about elimination.

“Herein a Bhikkhu does not accept a sensual thought, a malign thought, or cruel thought that has arisen from memory, but rejects it, expels it, makes an end of it, drives it out of renewed occurrence. One does not admit evil, unprofitable states of mind that arise from time to time, from memory, but rejects them, expels them, makes an end of them, and drives them out of renewed occurrence.”

If one practices the above two exercises – **Prevention** (*samvara*), **Elimination** (*pahāna*) conscientiously, it is possible that at least the first Ecstasy (*jhāna*) can be reached yet this purity of mind is only temporary. It can be polluted, and therefore it is unstable. It is only by practicing the next two exercises **Cultivation** (*bhāvanā*), and **Maintenance** (*anurakkhana*) that it can be brought to the point that it can never be polluted.

The sequence of events that lead to Ecstasy (jhāna):

1. When one practices conscientiously (*appamattassa viharatō*)
2. One begins to experience a feeling of joy (*pāmujaṇ jāyati*)
3. Joy develops into rapture (*pāmuditassa pīti jāyati*)
4. When mentally rapturous, the body relaxes (*pīti manassa kāyaṇ passambhati*)
5. The relaxed body feels comfortable (*passaddha kāyo sukhaṇ vēdiyati*)
6. When the body is comfortable the mind is in equilibrium (*sukhino cittaṇ samādhīyati*). This is ecstasy (*jhāna*).
7. When the mind is in equilibrium, Dhamma appears. (*samāhite citte dhammaṇ pātubhavo*) This means, the mind begins to understand how things come to be (*samāhite cite yathabhutan pajanati*). Equilibrium brings about introspection This is to focus on how one experiences, instead of on what one experiences. This is a paradigm shift from **existence** to **experience**. In other words, the mind becomes aware of the principle of “determinism” (*paticca samuppada*).

III) Cultivation (*Bhāvanā*)

This part of the exercise will be emphasised only at the advanced retreat because this is the cultivation of the “Seven Steps to Awakening” (*sapta bojjhanga*), which is the main practice at the advanced retreat.

Cultivation is the systematic cultivation of calm introspection unhindered by emotional arousal. This is achieved by firstly withdrawing attention from external objects and memories, as it was done at the first two exercises above, and secondly focusing attention on the experience within, which is the emotional reaction to external objections and memories. This means focusing attention on the emotional reaction to an object, rather than focusing attention on an object to which one reacts. This will also be practiced during this retreat, although the main focus on this practice will be at the Level III retreat.

The reaction to the object, which we focus on in this exercise, is in four stages:

1. Physical manifestation of the reaction in the body – (kayanu passana)
2. Sensual manifestation of the reaction as a feeling in the body – (vedananu passana)
3. Affective manifestation of the reaction as anger, fear, or lust – (cittanu passana)
4. Cognitive manifestation of the reaction as the interpretation of circumstances – (dhammanu passana)

In observing the reaction, we first observe the active phase or the physical manifestation of the reaction. It can be seen as movements of the body, the movement of breathing, and tension in the body.

Next we observe the reaction as sensations in the body such as comfortable, uncomfortable or neutral sensations. Tension is felt as an uncomfortable sensation. Relaxation is felt as a comfortable sensation. All movements of the body can be felt as neutral sensations.

Thirdly we observe the emotional states or moods (*citta*). We watch for the kind of emotion carried in the mood? Is it anger, fear, lust, or worry?

At the fourth stage we observe the thought that started the emotion. It is the thought that interpreted and gave meaning to what occurred outside in a particular circumstance. That meaning is what started the emotion. That is what needs to be seen and changed.

At first we change the mood by broadening our mind. This means we begin to see the other person's point of view, or inquire into other possible ways of interpreting the same situation. This is taking a broader perspective.

As we advance, however, we begin to become aware of the fact that our interpretation is only a concept and not a truth. We begin to examine how a concept is formed. As our mind calms down, we are able to observe the process of perception, by which we form the concept. We then realize that there are no truths in the world other than mere concepts, which may be logical or illogical. Even a logical concept is only a concept and not a truth. Therefore we do not need to take any concept too seriously. There are only good concepts and bad concepts. Good concepts bring happiness to oneself and others, and bad concepts bring unhappiness to oneself and others.

The seven steps in awakening (*satta bojjhanga*):

- 1) Introversion of Attention (*sati*)
- 2) Observation of Experience (*dhamma vicaya*)
- 3) Strength (*viriya*)
- 4) Rapture (*pīti*)
- 5) Relaxation (*passaddhi*)
- 6) Mental Equilibrium (*samādhī*)
- 7) Introspection (*upekkhā*)

“Herein a meditator cultivates the seven steps towards awakening (*satta bojjhanga*) that begins with **Introversion of Attention** (*sati*), which can only be achieved through solitude (*viveka*), dispassion (*virāga*), and discontinuance (*nirodha*) ending in liberation (*vossagga*).

Then one cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Conscious Observation of Experience** (*dhamma vicaya*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and discontinuance, ending in liberation.

Then one cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Strength** (*viriya*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and discontinuance, ending in liberation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Rapture** (*pīti*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and discontinuance, ending in liberation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Relaxation** (*passaddhi*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and discontinuance, ending in liberation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Mental Equilibrium** (*samādhi*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and discontinuance, ending in liberation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Introspection** (*upekkhā*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and discontinuance, ending in liberation.”

(*Bojjhanga Samyutta*)

IV) Maintenance (*Anurakkhana*)

The effort to **maintain** the state of calm and relaxation is the effort to keep focusing on what is going on within the body and the mind, instead of focusing on external objects. What is going on within is the reaction to the object perceived. This inward focus must be maintained through out the day.

When we focus on external objects we react to them. When we take our attention away from them, the reaction stops and we calm down. When we become constantly conscious of the reaction, the stop is maintained because it cannot go on consciously. This is because the reaction can occur only unconsciously.

This practice has to be done every moment in our lives, while we are in the four postures:

1. Walking
2. Standing
3. Sitting
4. Lying down

In other words, it is to be done every moment during the waking life, from the time one wakes up till one falls asleep. As one keeps on practising this way, the mind calms down and

the body relaxes. The practice turns into a habit. This results in mental happiness and physical comfort. This tranquil state of mind and body can be developed into the first ecstasy. This state of deep tranquillity could be further developed gradually into the Four Ecstasies (*jhāna*).

When one enters the fourth ecstasy by maintaining this purity and tranquility of mind, the mind becomes focused internally (*upekkha*). Then it becomes possible for the meditator to become aware of how one perceives, or the process of perception itself, in the form of the five accumulations (*panca khanda*):

1. Feelings (*Vedanā*)
2. Sensations (*Saññā*)
3. Mental Constructions (*Sankhāra*)
4. Perceptions (*Viññāna*)
5. Mental Images (*Rūpa*)

When the accumulations are perceived, what one perceives are the stages in the process of perception, which are commonly personalized as “mine.” The subjective process of perception is normally personalized while the object of perception is normally alienated as not mine.

Insight is gained when one is able to recognize that these stages in the process of perception are dependent on conditions and are therefore impersonal processes. This way one begins to see the impersonality of all phenomena. Then one begins to see that personalization of these impersonal phenomena only leads to suffering. It is in this way that the value of depersonalization is recognized. This makes one dispassionate and thereby one loses one’s personality perspective.

Although one has lost one's personality perspective, one is still aware of one's "feeling of self" that accompanies tension in the muscles and sensations that arise from them. Though there is no real "self" the "feeling of self" is still present. This is due to emotions that produce tensions. The constant awareness and observation of these feelings of self associated with emotions and tension helps one gradually reduce the "feeling of self." From here on it becomes a constant awareness of emotions and the "feeling of self." This leads to constant relaxed happy living, and good pleasant behaviour, which also brings happiness to others around.

5) Harmonious Attention (*sammā-sati*)

Harmonious attention is not mere "mindfulness," where one pays attention to whatever one does or perceives. It is **withdrawing** attention from **objects perceived** through the senses, and **focusing** attention on the **emotional reaction** to the object perceived, which is going on inside the body, and not outside. The real meaning of the term *satipatthana* (*sati+upatthana*) is the withdrawal of attention from external surroundings and focusing attention on what is going on inside (*parimukan satin upatthapetva*).

It is important to understand the purpose of our meditation, which is to stop reacting emotionally to what we perceive. We must understand that this reaction is going on unconsciously. A desire or hatred that comes up is not a conscious action we perform. It happens without our knowing how it occurred. This "harmonious attention" is to become conscious of the unconscious reaction, so that the **unconscious** reaction stops when made **conscious**.

We must understand that we are **organisms** in an **environment**. The organism reacts quite unconsciously to stimulation by the environment. This reaction creates a **conflict** between the organism and the environment. This conflict is the distress or **insecurity** (*dukkha*) that the Buddha spoke of, and that we all suffer from. Our aim is to **resolve this conflict** and bring about **harmony** through the “harmonious attention.”

So this harmonious attention is keeping the attention focused inwards or introverted, so that we become aware of the reaction that is going on within us. This reaction consists of four parts: 1) perception, 2) interpretation, 3) emotional arousal, 4) and action to release tension.

But we can become aware of it only in four other stages, starting from the body rather than the mind, which are:

1. **Body awareness** (*kāya anupassanā*).

This is awareness of what is going on in the body, in the form of the heart beating, hands shaking, muscle tension, rapid breathing, perspiration, etc.

2. **Sensation awareness** (*vedanā anupassanā*)

This is awareness of how one feels in the body, whether comfortable or uncomfortable.

3. **Mood awareness** (*citta anupassanā*)

This is awareness of the emotion present in the mood, or the calmness of the mood, or whatever be the nature of the mood.

4. **Thought awareness** (*dhamma anupassanā*)

This is awareness of the thoughts that interpreted one's circumstances, to which one reacted or not.

The fourfold exercise (*sammāppadhāna*), when practiced diligently, purifies and tranquilizes the mind and brings the mind to a state of equilibrium or mental repose (*samādhi*).

“Here the meditator abides seeing the body as body, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.

One abides seeing sensations as sensations, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.

One abides seeing emotions as emotions, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.

One abides seeing thoughts as thoughts, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.”

(*Satipathāna Sutta*)

Breathing Meditation (*ānāpāna sati*)

This is the method of maintaining and developing the tranquility so far attained. This is not an exercise in concentration but one of relaxation of body and calming the mind. When the body is relaxed and the mind is calmed down, attention automatically goes to the breathing. We watch the breathing to find out the extent to which we are agitated or calm.

Breathing is like a biofeedback machine that gives us feedback as to our degree of tranquility. The aim should be to relax the breathing.

By relaxing the breathing, we relax the whole body and we calm the mind.

By learning to pay attention to breathing, we can calm the body as well as the mind.

Keep relaxing the breathing. Let go of your whole body as you breathe out, as if you are dropping a weight that you were carrying. Let the breath come in freely as if you are opening the gate or canal for water to rush in.

Remember you are not trying to concentrate on the breathing. You are focusing your attention on the whole body in general. Your attention should be on the experience of the body from within. Observe the sensations of discomfort and comfort that indicate tensions and relaxation in the body. The breathing is only an activity of the body. Continue attention to the breathing in relation to the body in this way till your body relaxes gradually and the mind calms down. When the mind is tranquil and purified, you begin to experience happiness. When the mind is happy, the body relaxes further and you feel more comfortable. With this experience of comfort comes perfect stillness of mind.

The mind that runs about in search of happiness stops running when there is happiness experienced within. Try to maintain this state of happiness, comfort and stillness as long as possible. At first you might experience this tranquil state of mind only for a moment and then it might disappear. With practice, it begins to stay longer and longer. When it remains sufficiently long, you are in the first “*jhāna*” or first level of tranquility.

This is the cultivation of inner calm that is necessary before one can practice insight meditation to gain the insight

that frees one from all suffering forever. This insight is not seeing “lights,” or seeing pictures but becoming aware of the process of experiencing the Five Accumulations (*pancakkhanda*) and the **Antecedental Concurrence** of the components of experience (*paticca-samuppāda*), which leads to the depersonalization of experience. This when properly achieved leads to awakening from the dream of existence.

Attention to Breathing (*ānāpāna sati*)

Attention to breathing is commonly practiced today, as an exercise in concentration, but as it was taught by the Buddha it was not an exercise in concentration. It was an exercise in relaxation. By learning to relax the breathing, one can relax the entire body. When the body is relaxed, the mind calms down. When the mind is calmed, the mind and body are free from emotional agitation. As emotional disturbance disappears, the mind attains a state of equilibrium (*samādhi*). Samādhi is not concentration as commonly translated, it is **equilibrium** of the mind and body (*sama* = equal; *dhi* = the state). It is a state of mental and physical balance, or stillness of mind and body. Concentration implies tension and effort, whereas equilibrium is a state of rest and relaxation.

The purpose of Samādhi is to rest the mind or stop the activity called mind. Mind is not an entity different from the body. It is merely an activity of the body, which is mainly the activity of the nervous system, consisting of the brain, the spinal cord, the nerves and the senses. In fact, the entire body is involved in this activity called mind, just as the entire engine is involved in its activity.

Samādhi is a gradual stopping of this activity called mind, until it comes to an entire stop. This was what the Buddha achieved. After having stopped the mind, he restarted it. It was when he restarted it that he awoke from the dream of existence, and thus became a Buddha. Details of this will be discussed later but at this point we only need to know that what we call the mind is just an activity of the body. Therefore achieving tranquility of mind is nothing but stilling the activity.

Stages in the In and Out Breathing (ānāpāna sati) Meditation (MS Vol. III: 121-129)

1. Sit with your back straight
2. Withdraw your attention from external objects
3. Withdraw your attention from memories
4. Focus your attention on the subjective experience, which means look at your body from inside, in terms of how you feel the body.
5. Observe your inhalations and exhalations as they come and go, as you feel them.
6. Notice the length of your inhalations and exhalations.
7. Notice the feeling in your entire body, as you breathe in and out
8. Relaxing this bodily activity, breathe in and out. Relaxing is not doing anything, but not doing.
9. Experiencing rapture, breathe in and out
10. Experiencing the comfort of relaxation, breathe in and out

11. Observing the mental activity, breathe in and out
12. Calming the mental activity, breathe in and out
13. Being aware of the mood, breathe in and out
14. Super gladdening the mood, breathe in and out
15. Resting the mood, breathe in and out
16. Liberating the mood, breathe in and out
17. Observing instability, breathe in and out
18. Observing dispassion, breathe in and out
19. Observing termination, breathe in and out
20. Observing freedom, breathe in and out

It should be noted that the above description does not refer to concentration on the breathing, but to a constantly changing focus as you breathe in and out, while you relax the body and tranquillize the mind more and more. Finally, it leads to insight, and freedom.

Awareness of breathing gives feedback regarding the level of excitement and tension in the body, thus helping to relax and maintain calmness. This is the meaning of the practice of awareness of breathing in and out (*ānāpāna sati*).

6) Harmonious Mental Equilibrium (*sammā-samādhi*)

There are four levels of Tranquility or ecstasy (*jhāna*), in the cultivation of the four levels of ecstasy (*jhāna*). Before we begin, it is important to distinguish between ecstasy and the hypnotic state.

The hypnotic state is the result of concentration. It is a state of mind, which is midway between waking and sleeping. One can easily get into this state through lethargy and drowsiness (*thīna middha*) when meditating. Often this is mistaken for *samādhi* or *jhāna*.

Ecstasy (*jhāna*) is a state where the body is fully relaxed and the mind is fully awake and alert. With full awareness one experiences a state of mental bliss and bodily ease, free of emotional excitements and tensions. The first ecstasy has five parts to it as mentioned above, viz: inference (*vitakka*), inquiry (*vicara*), rapture (*pīti*), comfort (*sukha*), and stillness of mind (*ekaggatā*). There are four different levels of tranquility, as follows:

1. First ecstasy – inference, inquiry, rapture, comfort, stillness
2. Second ecstasy – rapture, comfort, stillness
3. Third ecstasy – comfort, stillness
4. Fourth ecstasy – stillness, introspection

These are called ecstasies because ecstasy means, “standing out.” It is standing out of the sensual world. What we call the world is only an experience. The normal experience of the human being is a sensual and emotional experience. When one enters the first ecstasy, one stands out of this sensual and emotional experience.

In the ecstasy, the mind is focussed within and free from all emotional disturbances. Entering the different levels of tranquillity is a gradual withdrawal from the emotional level that experiences a world outside. It is a gradual reduction of the experience of the sensual world. The world or experience

that one enters in this ecstasy is sometimes seen as the spiritual world.

Some even see it as entering heaven. Others call it union with God. We, however, call it simple ecstasy, which is a gradual emptying of the mind, or reduction of experience, or a **gradual stopping of the activity called “mind.”**

As the Sutta says: “Having withdrawn from carnal desires and evil states of mind, one enters the **First Ecstasy** (*jhāna*) consisting of inquiry (*vicara*) and inference (*vitakka*), rapture (*pīti*), comfort (*sukha*), and stillness (*ekaggatā*).

Then by giving up inquiry (*vicara*) and inference (*vitakka*), one enters the **Second Ecstasy** (*jhāna*) consisting of rapture (*pīti*), comfort (*sukha*), and stillness (*ekaggatā*).

Then one enters the **Third Ecstasy** (*jhāna*), having given up rapture (*pīti*), while comfort (*sukha*), and stillness (*ekaggatā*) remain.

Then one enters the **Fourth Ecstasy** (*jhāna*) having given up comfort (*sukha*), while stillness (*ekaggatā*) and introspection (*upekkhā*) remains.

ECSTASY (*JHĀNA*): A Gradual Reduction of Experience

FIRST <i>JHĀNA</i>	SECOND <i>JHĀNA</i>	THIRD <i>JHĀNA</i>	FOURTH <i>JHĀNA</i>
<i>Vicāra</i> (inquiry)			
<i>Vitakka</i> (inference)			
<i>Pīti</i> (rapture)	<i>Pīti</i> (rapture)		
<i>Sukha</i> (comfort)	<i>Sukha</i> (comfort)	<i>Sukha</i> (comfort)	
<i>Ekaggatā</i> (mental -stillness)	<i>Ekaggatā</i> (mental -stillness)	<i>Ekaggatā</i> (mental -stillness)	<i>Ekaggatā</i> (mental -stillness)

As indicated above, this is a gradual reduction of experience through relaxation of body and calmness of mind. This meditation is not something that a person does. If one attempts to do something, like concentration, the effort would only lead to the hypnotic state. One has to remain passive, not active. It is only a matter of relaxation, which is doing nothing. The ecstasy has to happen through a gradual series of withdrawals or letting go of experience.

The ecstasy reached during the steps to awakening (*bojjhanga*) is the ecstasy from which one never returns below the First Ecstasy (*samādhiṇ-anantarika- aññamahu*). This is the level of purity where one's mind is never polluted again. It is the purity of mind attained to by an Arahāt or Buddha.

END OF THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY

The retreat Level II begins and ends with the development of the Harmonious Exercise. Level III begins at the development of Harmonious Attention. In order to move on to the Level-III Retreat, however, one has to experience at least the First Ecstasy (*pathamaṃ jhāna*).

“Develop mental equilibrium (*samadhi*), Oh! Bhikkhus. One, whose mind is in equilibrium, is aware of how things come to be (*samāhite citte yathā bhutaṃ pajānāti*)”

(SN. Vol. V - 414)

There is no **ecstasy** (*jhāna*) without **insight** (*pañña*)

There is no **insight** (*pañña*) without **ecstasy** (*jhāna*)

One with both **ecstasy** (*jhāna*) and insight (*pañña*),

Is very **close** to *Nibbāna*.

(**Dhammapada** verse #372)

This is clear evidence that, according to the Buddha, there cannot be insight without mental equilibrium (*samādhi*).

APPENDIX

RELAXATION OF BODY

Relaxation is the opposite of tension in the muscles. It is the absence of tensions. Relaxation feels comfortable while tension is uncomfortable. Relaxation also calms the breathing. Relaxation of body and calmness of breathing makes the mind calm and happy. The calm and happy mind is also kind to others. Such a body and mind is also attractive to others. Such a person is skilful at work and efficient. This means it improves not only personality and character, but also competence.

Relaxation is practiced through exercises we do in the morning. These exercises not only helps one understand what relaxation is through ones own experience, but also helps one remain relaxed though out the day. This means one can be free from emotional disturbances throughout one's life if practiced conscientiously.

Tranquility of mind

Tranquility is achieved partly by relaxation of the body and partly by holding good images in the mind. The best image to hold in the mind is the image of the Buddha. The body of the Buddha is not present today to behold, we can only imagine the Buddha as a person who is perfectly calm and relaxed. We can also look at a well-painted picture of the Buddha or a statue of the Buddha that depicts the peaceful serenity of the Buddha. We could also imagine the Dhamma as the teaching about tranquility of mind and relaxation of body. We can imagine the Sangha as the followers who are practicing calmness and relaxation. We can also be inspired by group support while practicing calmness and relaxation ourselves, along with others.

How to still the mind

In order to understand how one can evolve consciously and learn to still the mind, we have to learn about the mind. The mind as the Buddha saw it is not an entity different from the body. The mind is an activity of the body. Just as an activity of an engine differs from the engine, so the mind as an activity differs from the entity called body. Both body and mind are experiences. We are able to experience the body as well as the mind. The body is an objective experience while the mind is a subjective experience. The body does many activities. But what we call the mind is the activity of the nervous system. There are three kinds of activities of the body, which the Buddha referred to as mind: Perception (*viññāna*), conception or cognition (*mano*), and the emotional mood or affection (*citta*).

This means, our mind has two main sections: one is affective and the other is the cognitive. The perceptual section comes under the cognitive. The cognitive section has two aspects: visual and verbal. We use both aspects in our thinking. The affective section deals with emotions while the cognitive section deals with thinking and reasoning. The Buddha called this emotional section *citta*, and the rational section *mano*. The emotional section (*citta*) is blind to reality, and the rational section or intellect (*mano*) is aware of reality. While the intellect tries to adjust to reality, the blind emotions come in conflict with reality.

The reality that the intellect is aware of is: that every event or circumstance is dependent on the necessary conditions. Even if one of the necessary conditions is absent, the event cannot occur. What is dependent on conditions is unstable (*anicca*). What is unstable is insecure, unpleasant and undesirable (*dukkha*). What is unpleasant and undesirable is not as I want. What is not as I want is not under my power. What is not under

my power is not mine. What is not mine cannot be me or my “Self” (*anattā*). This is the nature of reality: it is unstable, unpleasant, and impersonal. The wise intellect attempts to adjust to this reality, but the unwise blind emotions refuse to do so. This disagreement results in the conflict mentioned above.

Our emotions are not permanent entities, however. They come and go, dependent on conditions. An emotional disturbance, which is physical, always accompanies a picture in the mind. One kind of emotion can accompany different mental pictures. These emotions come in two basic forms: as a desire for pleasure and as a hatred of pain. This means, what these emotions ultimately seek is permanent pleasure, which is unrealistic and impossible. Pleasure does not remain with us always, and even if it remains, it does not continue to please us forever, we soon become bored with it. Pain though unpleasant is impermanent, and pain cannot be avoided altogether.

Emotions are also possessive and self-centered. We cannot really possess anything in the world, because all relationships are impermanent. Our self-centeredness is futile because we can never really preserve a permanent self or identity, because we change constantly, both physically and mentally and we cannot avoid death. This pursuit of eternal pleasure and eternal life is based on blind emotions and not on clear thinking. It is important to understand that our emotions come in conflict with reality because they are blind, and it is unwise to be carried away by them. It is wiser to be dominated by reason than by emotion. Emotions can never make us happy. They can only make us uncomfortable and unhappy. Happiness comes only through freedom from emotions. It is only when one realizes this fact that one can begin to cultivate true tranquility that leads to happiness.

Let us consider a person who is attracted to money or wealth; he may think that becoming wealthy is the greatest thing in the world, and then begin to earn wealth. When he makes a loss he becomes terribly unhappy. Another might think that social position is greater than wealth, and he might sacrifice wealth to gain social position. When he loses his position he comes to great discomfort as a result. Still, another person might believe that popularity is better than riches or even social position. The latter might sacrifice wealth and high social position to become popular and to secure a good name. Such a person might be blamed and lose the good name some way or other, and as a result suffer much pain of mind. Another person might think, “wealth is of little value,” “social recognition is of little value,” “popularity is of little value,” “what I need is sensual pleasure.” And then, keep on going after sensual pleasure, thinking that it is the greatest thing! Such a person too will be thoroughly disappointed when he/she ceases to get the pleasures that he/she craves for.

When the mind is free of emotional excitements the body is free from tension, and the mind is calm. Therefore the main task in stilling the mind is to free the mind of emotions. In order to achieve this, we practice two main methods: i) Prevention of emotions entering the mind and ii) Elimination of emotions once they have entered the mind. If these two tasks are accomplished properly, the mind becomes calm and the body is relaxed. To still the mind is to free the mind of emotional disturbances. It is emotions that produce tension in the body and also disturb the thinking.

Emotion is a reaction to stimulation of the senses. It is a chain reaction. Take for example the eye. First we see something, then we interpret or give meaning to what we see.

It is according to the way we interpret it that we are emotionally aroused. Therefore in order to stop this emotional reaction we must stop holding on to what we see and also stop interpreting what we see.

If a young man who is meditating sees a girl, he should not hold on to that image he saw, and he should not interpret what he saw as, for example, this is a sexy girl. It is this interpretation that arouses the sexual desire. In the same way, if someone says something and we interpret that as an insult, then anger is aroused. If we do not hold on to what we heard and do not interpret it, this is the way we prevent emotional thoughts entering the mind.

The next step is to get rid of an emotional thought that has already arisen in the mind. If the senses are guarded properly, the only other way the mind can get polluted is when memories come into the mind. When a memory comes to the mind, it comes as a mental image. If we cling to the image and begin to think about it, in sentences, then the emotion is aroused. Thoughts remain in the mind only in the form of visual images and verbal sentences. When such thoughts are present in the mind, emotions are aroused.

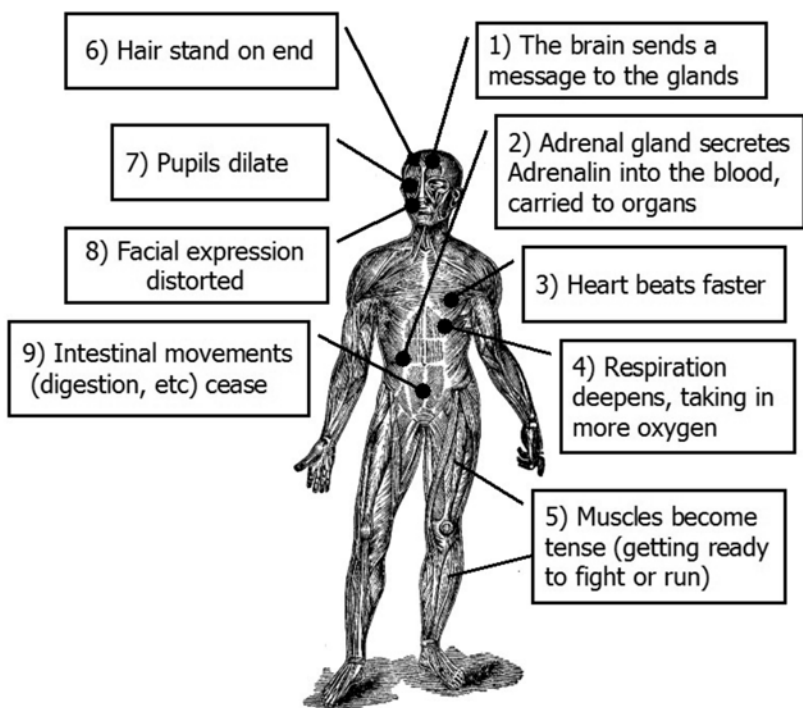
What is an emotion?

An emotion is not just a mental thought. It is a complete change in the body. It is according to the way one interprets ones circumstances that the emotion is aroused.

Take for instance, the arousal of anger. When anger emotion is aroused, a message from the brain goes through the sympathetic pathway to the adrenal gland, adrenalin (hormone) is secreted into the blood, and the blood carries it to

the whole body. Organs in the body begin to react in unusual ways depending on the hormone, preparing the body for action. In the case of anger emotion, the heart beats faster, breathing becomes heavier, muscles become tense, pupils dilate, hair stand on end, blood rushes to the capillaries in the face, muscles in the face contract to distort facial expression, intestinal movements (digestion, etc) cease. This special way the body reacts is commonly termed **“the fight or flight response,”** which is controlled by the *Amygdala* in the brain.

The Fight or Flight Reaction



The action depends on the emotion aroused, which may be an action to obtain what is desired, to get rid of what

is hated, or to run away from what is feared. Whatever be the action, the behavior of the body during emotional arousal is not normal or healthy. It is an emergency reaction, which is not very healthy, but could be sometimes helpful in an emergency. If this state of arousal continues too long, however, it can be extremely detrimental to the body.

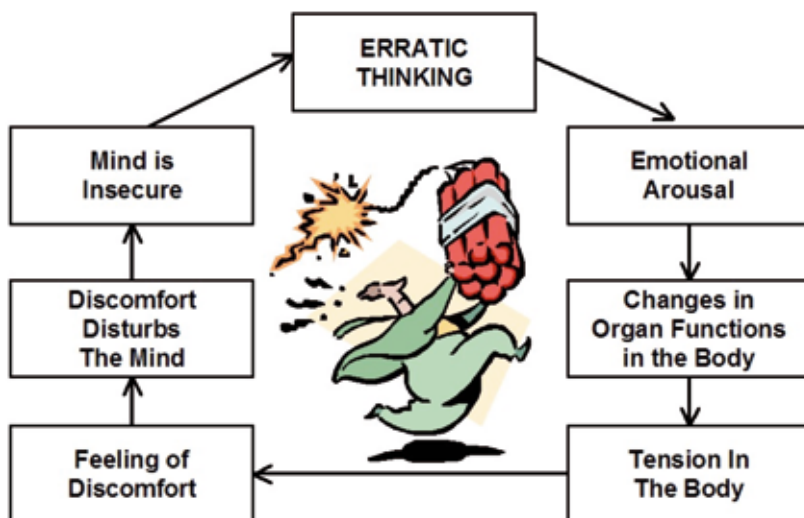
Emotions have been useful for animals for finding food or shelter, defending against threats, reproduction, as well as safety and security. Human beings have a better tool for that purpose, which is intelligence. Yet human beings are dominated by emotions most of the time. As a result we are not free from crime, violence, arrogance, war, insanity, and all the other evils that threaten mankind. All these evils occur in spite of the modern advancements in science and technology, which is rooted in the intellect. This means the intellect of modern man has become the slave of emotions rather than the other way around.

This is why this meditation practice of the Buddha is to make the intellect dominate the mind rather than the emotions. It is the intellect that should guide one's life rather than the emotions. Emotions should be subordinate to intellect. This is what some psychologists like Daniel Goldman have begun to call "emotional intelligence;" which does not mean that emotions have intelligence or can think at all. Emotions are blind; only the intellect can think. Emotional intelligence merely means that emotions are being guided by the intellect, putting emotions under its control.

Negative thoughts in our mind always produce emotional excitement and physical tension. This makes us unhappy

mentally and uncomfortable physically. This starts a vicious cycle we call the “*Vicious Cycle of Erratic Thinking*”. The mind affects the body and the body affects the mind. Negative thoughts cause emotional arousal, which brings about bodily reactions and tension in the body caused by the hormones secreted during emotional arousal. This tension causes discomfort, which disturbs the mind, which tends to project negative images onto the mental screen which in turn produce more negative thoughts. This in turn causes further emotional arousal, and we become victims of a Vicious Cycle.

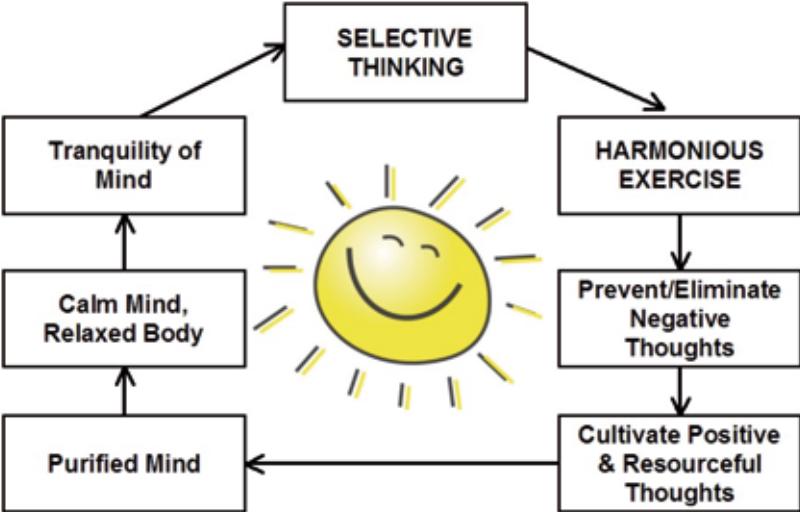
Vicious Cycle Of Erratic Thinking



This Vicious Cycle can be broken at two points: at the mind and at the body. We break the Vicious Cycle at the mind by calming the mind and applying **Selective Thinking** to refocus our thoughts positively and in a resourceful manner.

We break the Vicious Cycle at the body by learning to relax the body. **Harmonious Exercise** calms the mind and relaxes the body, which is what we will learn to apply in this Retreat. With **Selective Thinking** we break the Vicious Cycle and with **Harmonious Exercise**, we transform into what we call the *“Virtuous Cycle of Selective Thinking.”*

Virtuous Cycle Of Selective Thinking



GANAKA MOGGALLANA SUTTA

Thus have I heard:

1. Once the Blessed One was sojourning at Savatthi in the eastern park, of the mansion of Migara's mother. Then the Brahmin Ganaka Moggallana visited the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with Him. Having done so, he sat on a side before him and asked the Blessed One:
2. "Master Gotama, in this mansion of Migara's Mother there can be seen a gradual path, a gradual stepping, and a gradual progress, down to the last step of the staircase. Among these Brahmins too there can be seen a gradual path, gradual practice, and gradual progress, in our studies. Among archers too there can be seen a similar gradual training. Also among accountants like us, who earn our living by accountancy, there is to be seen a gradual training in computation. When we get an apprentice, we first teach him how to count. Is it also possible, master Gotama, to describe a gradual path of training in this Dhamma and Discipline?"
3. "It is possible, Brahmin, to describe a gradual training, a gradual practice, and a gradual progress in this Dhamma and Discipline. ... When the Tathagata obtains a person to be tamed he first disciplines him thus: **(1) 'Come, bhikkhu, be virtuous,** resort, restrained with the restraint of the *Patimokkha*. Be perfect in conduct, seeing fear in the slightest fault; meticulously undertake the training.
4. "When, Brahmin, the bhikkhu is virtuous ... seeing fear in the slightest fault, meticulously undertakes the training, **then** the Tathagata disciplines him further: 'Come bhikkhu, **(2) guard your senses.** On seeing an object with the eye,

do not reflect on its features or anything associated with it. If you leave your senses unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade you. So practice restraint, guard the eye faculty. Undertake the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear ... On smelling an odor with the nose ... On tasting a flavor with the tongue ... On touching a tangible with the body ... On forming a concept in the mind, do not grasp its contents or any associations. Since, if you were to leave the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states might invade you. Follow the way of restraint. Guard the mind faculty. Undertake the restraint of the mind faculty.’

5. “When, Brahmin, the bhikkhu guards the doors of his sense faculties, **then** the Tathagata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, **(3) be moderate in eating.** Reflecting wisely, you should take food neither for amusement, nor for intoxication, nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: ‘Thus I shall terminate old feelings without arising new feelings, and I shall be healthy and blameless, and shall live in comfort.’”
6. “When, Brahmin, the bhikkhu is moderate in eating, then the Tathagata disciplines him further: ‘Come bhikkhu, **(4) be devoted to wakefulness.** During the day, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the middle watch of the night you should lie down on the right side in the lion’s pose with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in your

mind the time for rising. After rising, in the third watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states.’

7. “When, Brahmin, the bhikkhu is devoted to wakefulness, **then** the Tathagata disciplines him further: ‘Come bhikkhu, **(5) be possessed of introverted attention (*sati*) and observant (*sampajañña*)**. Be introspective when going forward and returning; Be introspective when looking ahead and looking away; Be introspective when flexing and extending your limbs; Be introspective when wearing your robes and carrying your outer robe and bowl; Be introspective when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; Be introspective when defecating and urinating; Be introspective when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.
8. “When, Brahmin, the bhikkhu possesses introverted attention (*sati*) and introspection (*sampajañña*), then the Tathagata disciplines him further: ‘Come bhikkhu, **(6) resort to a secluded resting place:** the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.”
9. “He resorts to a secluded resting place: a forest, or empty hut, or root of a tree, a heap of straw. On returning from his alms-round, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, withdrawing his attention from the surroundings and establishing attention within. **Abandoning lust** for the world, he abides with a mind free from lust; he purifies his mind from lust. **Abandoning ill will** and hatred, he abides with a mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred. **Abandoning**

laziness and sleepiness, he abides free from sloth and torpor, percipient of light, with introverted attention and introspective, he purifies his mind from sloth and torpor. **Abandoning anxiety and worry**, he abides undisturbed with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind from worry and anxiety. **Abandoning mental confusion**, he abides free from confusion, free from perplexity about wholesome states; he purifies his mind from confusion.

10. “Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, emotions that distort thinking, withdrawn from sensual pleasures, withdrawn from unwholesome thoughts, accompanied by inquiry and inference, with rapture and comfort born of relinquishment he enters upon and abides in **the first ecstasy (jhana)**.

With the stilling of inquiry and inference, being internally purified with tranquil temper, he enters upon and abides in **the second ecstasy (jhana)**, which is free from inquiry and inference, but with rapture and comfort born of tranquility (*samadhi*).

Then having relinquished rapture, he abides introspective, with attention introverted and observant, experiencing comfort in the body, thus entering the **third ecstasy (jhana)**, about which the Sublime-Ones proclaim: ‘the introspective introvert lives in comfort.’

Having abandoned both comfort and discomfort, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, free from pleasure and pain, being purified by introspection and introverted attention, he enters **the fourth ecstasy (jhana)**.

11. “This is my instruction, Brahmin, to those bhikkhus who are in the higher training, whose minds have not

yet attained the goal, who abide aspiring to the supreme security from bondage. But these things conduce both to a pleasant abiding here and now, and to introverted attention and observation for those bhikkhus who want to be Arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their special goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through Super knowledge.”

12. When this was said, the Brahmin Ganaka Moggallana asked the Blessed One: “When Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, do they all attain Nibbana, the ultimate goal, or do some not attain it?”
13. “Master Gotama, since Nibbana exist and the path leading to Nibbana exist and Master Gotama is present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, some of them attain Nibbana, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it?”
14. “As to that, Brahmin, I will ask you a question in return. Answer it as you choose. What do you think, Brahmin? Are you familiar with the road leading to Rajagaha?”

“Yes, Master Gotama, I am familiar with the road leading to Rajagaha.”

“What do you think, Brahmin? Suppose a man who wanted to go to Rajagaha approached you and said: ‘Dear sir, I want to go to Rajagaha. Show me the road to Rajagaha.’ Then you told him: ‘Good man, this is the road that goes to Rajagaha. Follow it for awhile and you will see a certain village, go a little further and you will see a certain town, go a little further and you will see Rajagaha with its lovely

parks, groves, meadows, and ponds.’ Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would take a wrong road and would go to the west. Then suppose a second man came, who wanted to go to Rajagaha, and he approached you and said: ‘Dear sir, I want to go to Rajagaha. Show me the road to Rajagaha.’ Then you told him the way similarly. Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would arrive safely in Rajagaha. Now, Brahmin, since Rajagaha exists and the path leading to Rajagaha exists and you are present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when those men have been advised and instructed by you, one man takes a wrong road and goes to the west, and one arrives safely in Rajagaha?”

“What can I do about that, Master Gotama? I am only one who shows the way.”

“So too, Brahmin, Nibbana exists, and the path leading to Nibbana exists, and I am present as the guide, yet, when my disciples have been thus advised and instructed by me, some of them attain Nibbana, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it. What can I do about that, Brahmin? The *Tathagata* is only one who shows the way.”

15. “When this was said, the Brahmin Ganaka Moggallana said to the Blessed One. “There are persons who are faithless, and have gone forth from the home life into homelessness not out of faith, but seeking a livelihood, who are fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, loose-spoken, unguarded in their sense faculties, immoderate in eating, not devoted to wakefulness, unconcerned with hermit life, not greatly respectful of training, luxurious, careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion, lazy, wanting in

energy, unmindful, not fully aware, not calm, with straying minds, devoid of wisdom, drivellers. Master Gotama does not dwell together with these.

“But there are clansmen who have gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness, who are not fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, and loose-spoken; who are guarded in their sense faculties, moderate in eating, devoted to wakefulness, concerned with hermit life, greatly respectful of training, not luxurious or careless, who are keen to avoid backsliding, leaders in seclusion, energetic, resolute, established in introspection and reflection, calm, with unified minds, possessing wisdom, not drivellers, Master Gotama dwells together with these.

16. “Just as black orrisroot is reckoned as the best of root perfumes, and red sandalwood is reckoned as the best of wood perfumes, and jasmine is reckoned as the best of flower perfumes, so too, Master Gotama’s advice is supreme among the teachings of the world.
17. “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though we were turning upright what had been overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha. Let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has taken refuge for life.”

DANTABHŪMI SUTTA

The Grade of the Tamed

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.**

Once the Blessed One was sojourning at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary.

2. On that occasion the novice Aciravata was living in a forest hut. Then Prince Jayasena, while wandering and walking for exercise, went to the novice Aciravata and exchanged greetings with him.¹¹⁷⁴ When his courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the novice Aciravata: "Master Aggivessana, I have heard that a bhikkhu who abides here diligent, ardent, and resolute can achieve unification of mind."

"That is so, prince, that is so. A bhikkhu who abides here diligent, ardent, and resolute can achieve unification of mind."

3. "It will be good if Master Aggivessana would teach me the Dhamma as he has heard it and mastered it."

"I cannot teach you the Dhamma, prince, as I have heard it and mastered it. For if I were to teach you the Dhamma as I have heard it and mastered it, you would not understand the meaning of my words, and that would be wearying and troublesome for me." [129]

4. "Let Master Aggivessana teach me the Dhamma as you have heard it and mastered it. Perhaps I can understand the meaning of your words."

"If so, I shall teach you the Dhamma, prince, as I have heard it and mastered it. If you can understand the meaning of my words, that will be so good. But if you cannot

understand the meaning, then leave it at that, and do not question me about it further.’

“Let Master Aggivessana teach me the Dhamma, as you have heard it and mastered it. If I can understand the meaning of your words, that will be so good. If I cannot understand the meaning, then I will leave it at that, and I will not question you about it any further.”

5. Then the novice Aciravata taught Prince Jayasena the Dhamma as he had heard it and mastered it. After he had spoken, Prince Jayasena remarked: “It is impossible, Master Aggivessana, it cannot happen that a bhikkhu who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute can achieve unification of mind.” Then, having declared to the novice Aciravata that this was impossible and could not happen, Prince Jayasena rose from his seat and departed.
6. Soon after Prince Jayasena had left, the novice Aciravata went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to the Blessed One, he sat down at one side and reported to the Blessed One his entire conversation with Prince Jayasena. When he had finished, the Blessed One said to him:
7. “Aggivessana, how is it possible that Prince Jayasena, living in the midst of sensual pleasures, enjoying sensual pleasures, being devoured by thoughts of sensual pleasures, being consumed by the fever of sensual pleasures, bent on the search for sensual pleasures, [130] could know, see, or realise that which must be known through renunciation, seen through renunciation, attained through renunciation, realised through renunciation? That is impossible.
8. “Suppose, Aggivessana, there were two tamable elephants, horses or oxen that were well tamed and well

disciplined, and two tamable elephants, horses, and oxen that were untamed and undisciplined. What do you think, Aggivessana? Would the two tamable elephants, horses, and oxen that were well tamed and well disciplined, being tamed, acquire the behaviour of the tamed, would they arrive at the grade of that tamed?” – “Yes, venerable sir.” – “But would the two tamable elephants, horses, and oxen that were untamed and undisciplined, being untamed, acquire the behaviour of the tamed, would they arrive at the grade of that tamed, like the two tamable elephants, horses, and oxen that were well tamed and well disciplined?” – “No, venerable sir.” – “So too, Aggivessana, it is impossible that Prince Jayasena, living in the midst of sensual pleasures, ...could know, see, or realise that which must be known through renunciation, seen through renunciation, attained through renunciation, realised through renunciation.”

9. “Suppose, Aggivessana, there were a high mountain not far from the village or town, and two friends would leave the village or town and approach the mountain hand in hand. Having reached it, one friend would remain below at the foot of the mountain while the other would climb to the top. Then the friend who remained below at the foot of the mountain would say to the friend who stood at the top: ‘Well friend, what do you see, standing on the top of the mountain?’ And the other replied: ‘Standing on the top of the mountain, friend, I see lovely parks, lovely groves, lovely meadows, and lovely ponds.’ Then the friend who remained below would say: ‘it is impossible, [131] friend, it cannot happen that while standing on top of the mountain you should see lovely parks, lovely groves, lovely meadows, and lovely ponds.’

Then the friend who climbed the top would come down to the foot of the mountain, take his friend by the arm, and make him climb to the top of the mountain. After giving him a few moments to catch his breath, he would ask: ‘Well, friend, now standing on top of the mountain, what do you see?’ And his friend would reply: ‘Standing on top of the mountain, friend, I see lovely parks, lovely groves, lovely meadows, and lovely ponds.’ Then the other would say: ‘Friend, just a little earlier we heard you say: “It is impossible, friend, it cannot happen that while standing on top of the mountain you should see lovely parks...lovely ponds.” But just now we heard you say: “Standing on the top of the mountain, friend, I see lovely parks...lovely ponds.”’ Then the other friend would reply: ‘Because I was obstructed by these high mountain, friend, I did not see what was there to be seen.’”

10. “So too, Aggivessana, Prince Jayasena is obstructed, hindered, blocked, and enveloped by a still greater mass than this mass of ignorance. Thus, it is impossible that Prince Jayasena, living in the midst of sensual pleasures,... could know, see, or realise that which must be known through renunciation, seen through renunciation, attained through renunciation, realised through renunciation.”
11. “Aggivessana, if these two similes had occurred to you [with reference] to Prince Jayasena, he would have spontaneously acquired confidence in you, and being confident, would have shown his confidence to you.”

“Venerable sir, how could these two similes have occurred to me, as they occurred to the Blessed One. They are spontaneous to the Blessed One. I have never heard them before?”

[132] 12. “Suppose Aggivessana, a head-anointed noble King addresses his elephant woodsman thus: ‘Good elephant woodsman, mount the king’s elephant, enter the elephant wood, and when you see a forest elephant, bind him by the neck to the king’s elephant.’ Having replied ‘Yes, Sire,’ the elephant woodsman mounts the king’s elephant, enters the elephant wood, and when he sees a forest elephant, binds him by the neck to the king’s elephant. The king’s elephant leads him out to the open. It is in this way that a forest elephant comes out into the open; for the forest elephant clings to the elephant wood.”

“Then the elephant woodsman informs the head-anointed noble king: ‘Sire, the forest elephant has come out into the open.’ The king addresses his elephant tamer thus: ‘Come, good elephant tamer, tame the forest elephant. Subdue his forest habits, subdue his forest memories and intentions, subdue his distress, fatigue, and fever over leaving the forest. Get him to take delight in the town, inculcate in him habits congenial to human beings.’ Having replied ‘Yes, Sire,’ the elephant tamer plants the large post in the earth and binds the forest elephant to it by the neck in order to subdue his forest habits...and to inculcate in him habits congenial to human beings.”

“Then the elephant tamer addresses the elephant with words that are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and lovable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many, and agreeable to many. When the forest elephant [133] is addressed by such words, he listens, gives ear, and exerts his mind to understand. The elephant tamer next rewards him with grass-fodder and water. When the forest elephant accepts

the grass-fodder and water from him, the elephant tamer knows: ‘Now the king’s elephant will live!’”

“Then the elephant tamer trains him further thus: ‘Take up, put down!’ When the king’s elephant obeys his tamers orders to take up and put down and carries out his instructions, the elephant tamer trains him further thus: ‘Go forward, go back!’ When the king’s elephant obeys his tamer’s orders to go forward and go back and carries out his instructions, the elephant tamer trains him further thus: ‘Get up, sit down!’ when the king’s elephant obeys his tamers orders to get up and sit down and carries out his instructions, the elephant tamer trains him further in the task called imperturbability. He ties a giant plank to his trunk; a man with a lance in his hand sits on his neck; men with lances in their hands surround him on all sides; and the elephant tamer himself stands in front of him holding a long lance pole. When the elephant is being trained in the task of imperturbability, he does not move his forelegs or his hindlegs; he does not move his forequarters or his hindquarters; he does not move his head, ears, tusks, tail or trunk. The king’s elephant is able to endure blows from spears, blows from swords, blows from arrows, blows from other beings, and the thundering sounds of drums, kettledrums, trumpets, and tomtoms. Being rid of all faults and defects, purged of flaws, he is worthy of the king, in the king’s service, considered one of the properties of a king. [134]*****

- 13-14. “So too, Aggivessana, a Tathāgata appears in the world, accomplished, fully enlightened...(as sutta 51, SS12-13)...he shaves of his hair and beard, puts on the yellow robe, and goes forth from the home life

into homelessness. It is in this way that a noble disciple comes out to the open; for gods and humans cling to the five cords of sensual pleasure.”

- 26-29. “When his mind is thus purified...(as Sutta 51, ss24-27).... He understands: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’
30. “That bhikkhu is able to endure cold and heat, hunger and thirst, and contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things; he is able to endure ill-spoken, unwelcome words and arisen bodily [137] feelings that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, distressing, and menacing to life. Being rid of all lust, hate, and delusion, purged of flaws, he is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutations, an unsurpassed field of merit for the world.
31. “if Aggivessana, the king’s elephant dies in old age untamed and undisciplined, then he is considered an old elephant that has died an untamed death. If the king’s elephant dies when middle-aged untamed and undisciplined, then he is considered a middle-aged elephant that has died an untamed death. If the king’s elephant dies when young untamed and undisciplined, then he is considered a young elephant that has died an untamed death. So too, Aggivessana, if an elder bhikkhu dies with his taints undestroyed, then he is considered an elder bhikkhu who has died an untamed death. If a bhikkhu of middle status dies with his taints undestroyed, then he is considered of middle status who has died an untamed death. If a newly ordained bhikkhu dies with his taints undestroyed, then he is considered a newly ordained bhikkhu who had an untamed death.”

32. “if Aggivessana, the king’s elephant dies in old age well tamed and well disciplined, then he is considered an old elephant that had a tamed death. If the king’s elephant dies when middle-aged well tamed and well disciplined, then he is considered a middle-aged elephant that had a tamed death. If the king’s elephant dies when young well tamed and well disciplined, then he is considered a young elephant that had a tamed death. So too, Aggivessana, if an elder bhikkhu dies with his taints destroyed, then he is considered an elder bhikkhu who had a tamed death. If a bhikkhu of middle status dies with his taints destroyed, then he is considered of middle status who had a tamed death. If a newly ordained bhikkhu dies with his taints destroyed, then he is considered a newly ordained bhikkhu who had a tamed death.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The novice Aciravata was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

CONCLUSION

The **purpose** of Buddhist meditation is not mere tranquility or insight but **awakening from the dream of existence**. This dream of **existence of a “self” and a “world” is filled with unhappiness** because of dissatisfaction, frustration, disappointment, boredom, failure, loss, inadequacy and the millions of worries, anxieties, depressions that commonly fill our lives. Aging, sickness and Death is the most unavoidable unfavorable part of this dream. One **who is awake from this dream is not only happy always, but also immortal here and now** - not after death. This was why the **Buddha opened his mission to save**, those with a little dust in their eyes, **from suffering and death**, in the well-known words:

**“Open is the door to immortality
May those who have ears, listen, ...
And be freed by this sound”)))**

*Apârutâ tesan amatassa dvârâ
Ye sotavanto pamuccantu saddan*

WHO IS VEN. MADAWELA PUNNAJI

AN INTRODUCTION



Ven. Dr. Madawela Punnaaji Maha Thera is a disciple of the Most Ven. Madihe Paññasiha of Vajirarama, Colombo; the well known late Mahanayaka Thera, Head of the Mihiripanne Dhammarakkhita Amarapura Nikaya.

Ven. Punnaaji was ordained at the Bhikkhu Training Centre, Maharagama, in his thirties. He completed his academic studies in modern science and Western medicine while in Sri Lanka, and he obtained two doctorates while in the United States, one in Western psychology, and another in Western philosophy and comparative religion. He completed his Buddhist monastic studies while at the Bhikkhu Training Center where he was ordained. He completed his training in meditation, including an intensive research, at the Island Hermitage, Dodanduwa.

In 1971 Ven. Punnaaji was sent by his preceptor, the Most Ven. Madihe Paññasiha, to the newly started Washington Buddhist Vihara, the only Sri Lankan Vihara in America at that time. In 1977 he was invited to Boston and became the president of the Triple Gem society, where he taught yoga and meditation to Americans and conducted a research in Buddhist psychology and psychotherapy, in association with the Boston University and Harvard University. In 1980 he conducted a course in Buddhist philosophy in the University of Vermont, at the Living and Learning Centre. In 1981 he was invited to Canada to be the Abbot of the Toronto Maha Vihara. In 1974 he was invited by Mr. R. Premadasa (who later became the President of Sri Lanka) to be the director of the Mihindu Sarasaviya, a Buddhist Research Institute in Mihintale Sri Lanka. In 1977 he was invited to the Fo Kuan Shan Monastic University in Taiwan as a Professor of Buddhism. Since then

he has been living in retirement in North America teaching meditation, Buddhist philosophy and psychology.

Ven. Punnaaji has made a life long research to discover the original teachings of the Buddha, which he has found to be different from all the modern schools of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, including Zen and Pure-land Buddhism. His research also made him realize that Buddhism, in its original form, was not a mere religion of faith, prayer, and obedience to rules, but a psychological technique of growth and evolution of the human consciousness. His research has not been merely academic but also experiential. This has made him capable of speaking out of his own experience instead of merely repeating what he has read in books. Ven. Punnaaji's interest in Western psychology has led him to the discovery of a form of Buddhist Psychotherapy, which he thinks is the best way to introduce Buddhism to the modern world.

Ven. Punnaaji has played a significant role in the dissemination of Buddhism in the West and is well known to Buddhists in Canada, United States and abroad. Sought by many as a resourceful spiritual guide, Ven. Punnaaji shares his time between the Buddhist centres in Canada, United States, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and other countries.

*Discover the original teachings of the Buddha
by Ven. Dr. Madawela Punnaaji Maha Thera,
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- | | | |
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